Illini spy for FBI now a student radical

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aff Writer

URBANA — The people who new Bob Harris when he was junior at the University of Illinois campus here would ave trouble recognizing him ow.

Last year, Harris was president of his dormitory. He had o doubt that the "university ystem" was working and he istrusted radicals who talked f destroying it. He was an aplicant for Air Force Officer raining School. He wore his air in a close-cropped rewcut.

Now, after a year during hich he spied on student adical groups for the FBI, Harris wears his hair long and ports a moustache. More ignificant changes have occurred in Harris' attitude oward the society in which he lives.

The 21-year-old electronics engineering senior, who once epitomized the "silent majority" on this Champaign campus, has become a student radical.

"I'm not sure my parents will be able to understand what has happened to me," said Harris. "I'm not sure I really understand."

WHAT HARRIS says he does understand — and feels deeply about — is that his spying activities constituted disloyalty to his friendships with student radicals, friendships he has come to value highly.

"My political views have changed, of course, but the friendships I've made are the most important reason why I'm no longer co-operating with the **FBI**," Harris said.

The "openness and trust" of the student radicals he befriended was in stark contrast to his own role as an undercover informant, he said.

WHILE HARRIS now calls himself a radical, he is not a convert to the Students for a Democratic Society, nationwide radical student group. He has deep doubts about the "uncompromising" political style of the SDS and the "manipulative character assassination" employed by some of its more militant members.

Though he doesn't want to join the SDS, Harris does not believe that the SDS constitutes any clear and present danger at the University of Illinois.

In this he disagrees with the FBI agents with whom he formerly worked.

"I have no reason to doubt their (the agents') sincerity," Harris said. "I just think that a lot of their information about the SDS is right-wing propaganda that is not at all objective."

THE FUTURE of the SDS on the University of Illinois campus depends on the university administration more than the small SDS membership, he said.

"The issues raised by the SDS are valid," he said. "And if the university is incompetent or slow to respond to these issues, more and more students will get turned off.

"And then the SDS may have a large base of students to organize an action around."

While Harris doesn't think much of the SDS, he has grown close to the Resistance — a loose, nationwide coalition of draft resisters and their sympathizers.

Last in a series

"It's nothing noisy with me," he said. "It's more a personal thing. I'm not the type who would go out and burn his draft card at a public ceremony, but I am considering going to jail rather than permitting myself to be drafted."

HARRIS WROTE a letter of formal resignation to FBI agent Ronald Kloepfer early last month. On April 17, Harris met with Kloepfer to talk about it.

"We rode along country roads outside the city," Harris said. "At one point Kloepfer saw a pheasant and stopped the car. He handed me his pistol and asked if I could hit the bird. I fired, but I missed.

"I don't know why he did that. It was weird."

HARRIS SAID Kloepfer then asked him to stay on as an FBI informant. He offered to pick up expenses if Harris would attend regional and national SDS meetings.

But Harris, who said he already had collected $75 in cash for previous expenses, told the agent he wasn't interested.

Then, Harris said, Kloepfer issued a vague warning.

"He told me that they (FBI) knew as much or more about [redacted] I knew myself."

Harri[redacted] "And for that reasc[redacted]ected me to keep my re[redacted]n with them confident[redacted]

HA[redacted]D, then to keep quiet[redacted] he changed his m[redacted]er conversations with [redacted]'s psychiatrist and h[redacted]ssal.

"One week ago," Harris said, "I would not have said this. Now I feel it must be done. I do not know that the FBI was wrong. I do not know that the SDS is wrong. I do not know that I am right. I do know this must be written."